

# Shared Challenges—Joint Solutions?

## The United States and Europe Face New Global Security Risks—High Times for Grand Strategy

*Ralph Rotte and Christoph Schwarz*

### How Much “Change” can be Expected?

In his critical examination of the history of American foreign policy, past and present, Walter Russell Mead observes that the grand strategy of the United States cannot be found in either strategic documents or speeches by senior officials. This is because such statements merely articulate goals and aspirations; they do not provide evidence of how the United States would actually act in any particular situation. Examining past behavior is, in his view, better suited for shedding light on the United States’ overall strategy. Given the multiple factors influencing it, predictions about the future direction of US foreign policy are subject to great uncertainty and should therefore be viewed with caution.<sup>1</sup> One may well take a critical view of the demanding standard that Mead implies should be applied to grand strategy. Other authors single out the course-setting function as the primary purpose of grand strategy: that is, to integrate and coordinate the various means for achieving security in accordance with the foreign and security policy objectives of the state or alliance.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these differing opinions about the function and purpose of grand strategy, Mead’s observation offers a useful starting point for this

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Reprinted with courtesy from Reinhard C. Meier-Walser, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the USA: President Obama’s New Course and the Future of Transatlantic Relations*, Berichte & Studien [Reports & Studies] 89 (Munich: Hans-Seidel Foundation, 2009)

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<b>Report Documentation Page</b>			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
<p>Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.</p>					
1. REPORT DATE <b>2009</b>	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2009 to 00-00-2009</b>			
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b> <b>Shared Challenges-Joint Solutions? The United States and Europe Face New Global Security Risks-High Times for Grand Strategy</b>			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> <b>Air University,Strategic Studies Quarterly,155 N. Twining Street, Building 693,Maxwell AFB ,AL,36112-6026</b>			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
<b>9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> <b>See also ADA505970.</b>					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b>					
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b>					
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b> a. REPORT      b. ABSTRACT      c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b> <b>unclassified</b> <b>unclassified</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b> <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b> <b>17</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>

article, which is concerned with the prospects for coordinated transatlantic efforts in dealing with the new and varied security challenges as well as threats that exist at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. First of all, Mead's reference to the complexity involved in the process of shaping strategy is useful in qualifying the widespread "Obamamania"<sup>3</sup> recently observed in Europe by pointing out that, in spite of his broad authority in foreign policy, the 44th president of the United States can by no means act autonomously in pursuit of his agenda. Much to the contrary, he is part of a complex network of interests and relationships vested in Congress, the media, lobbies, and the US political culture in general. With this in mind, one can only wait and see how Barack Obama positions himself with respect to various issues and, above all, whether he will (or can) stick to the positions he enumerated during his campaign.<sup>4</sup> This same situation applies equally, if not more so, to European governments.

Second, if observation of the past offers insight into current and future American behavior abroad, as Mead suggests, then it is certainly justified to expect a considerable degree of continuity with respect to such determining factors as values, self-perception, and interests in this policy field.<sup>5</sup> These elements of continuity, often insufficiently appreciated in Europe, might temper the euphoria that accompanied calls for "change." Rather than a fundamental departure (and rejection) of the policies of the Bush administration, it can be expected that under President Obama there will be "change" that is gradual in nature. As a result, one may presume that the underlying sources of conflict that exist in transatlantic relations have by no means disappeared following Obama's taking office. Rather, the opposite may be the case. Even now, new potential conflicts are about to emerge.<sup>6</sup>

Third, one must bear in mind the importance of situational influences as determining factors in shaping actions. These can have an influence independent of any prior positions an administration may have held and result in the complete revision or at least a gradual shift of the center of gravity in any number of policy areas. George W. Bush's role as a war president would be unthinkable without the events of 11 September 2001. Without doubt, nothing prior to the devastating attacks of 9/11 offered any indication that the global war on terror would be the defining element of both his terms in office.

Accordingly, it seems reasonable to take a skeptical attitude with respect to any expectation of a reversal in American foreign policy under Obama vis-à-vis the course taken by his predecessor. At the same time,

one can already clearly discern a gradual shift in the policy statements of the former candidate.<sup>7</sup> These changes concern precisely those new global security risks that the European Union placed at the center of its *European Security Strategy (ESS)* released in 2003: transnational terrorism, the threat to transatlantic security resulting from the ongoing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the dangers emanating from “failed states.”<sup>8</sup> The latter are consistently present in discussions about the most effective means for securing stability in Iraq. These three areas, which represent only a sample of potential threats included in a comprehensive understanding of security, will be examined more closely from a comparative perspective in the following analysis.

It should be emphasized that opinions about either the chances for co-operation or the potential for conflict that exist between the United States and Europe offer no details about the effectiveness of any efforts made to tackle the threats faced. In this regard, one must refer in particular to the Bush administration’s much lamented strategic deficiencies, or, more precisely, the failure to connect (political) purpose with (military, etc.) means, in the Clausewitzian sense.<sup>9</sup> However, the same charge can be directed equally against the EU and its member states. They, too, applied an ineffectual approach to the use of their foreign- and security-policy apparatuses.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, it is not only a matter of fundamental strategic consensus (though that is clearly of crucial importance) but rather of the effective use of limited resources—choosing the correct instruments as well as perhaps the proper division of labor needed to achieve commonly held goals.<sup>11</sup> An evaluation of the potential for cooperation between the United States and Europe focused on this issue could form the basis for a dialogue between the two sides aimed at identifying and putting to best possible use the existing capabilities available to both sides.

## **New Security Threats in International Affairs and the Strategic Responses by the United States and Europe**

By now it is commonly understood that the essential nature of international threats drastically changed with the end of the bipolar order in 1989–90. In the period that followed, threat perception was no longer dominated by the danger of a conflict between states in antagonistic alliance systems possibly involving the use of nuclear weapons. Additionally, now there were new challenges that contained a unique set of security risks

as well as possible new causes of conflict and war.<sup>12</sup> A broadened interpretation of the concept of security takes this development into account by integrating a number of nonmilitary factors as well as new forms of military threats that exist alongside “classic” state-centric military scenarios. Contrary to the widespread assumption that traditional threats such as, for example, state-to-state conflict have ceased to play a significant role in world affairs,<sup>13</sup> precisely the opposite has actually proven to be the case during the first decade of the twenty-first century. One can say without hesitation, therefore, that both “classic” and novel threats to national and international security currently exist side by side.

Though the advent of a comprehensive approach to security coincided with the end of the Cold War, it is problematic to characterize as “new” those security-related developments that have since gained greater significance. The threats themselves are by no means new; the phenomenon of terrorism has been with us since ancient times.<sup>14</sup> What has actually changed is, on the one hand, the quality of the threat—the ability, for example, of terrorists to stage nearly simultaneous attacks that produce mass casualties, as was clearly demonstrated on 9/11. This results, on the other hand, in a shift in emphasis among the priorities of national and international security policy so that, as a consequence of 9/11, inter-/transnational terrorism is now identified as one of the central if not foremost threats to security.<sup>15</sup> And, finally, the often observed interdependencies between organized crime and terrorism are one of the central features of current developments.

The latter aspect, in particular, points to a problem that has so far received too little consideration in the assessment of a broadened concept of security. The issue here has to do with “operationalization,” the difficulty of adjusting the strategic orientation of national and international foreign and security policies to fit the kinds of complex threats we confront. Even if the relevant documents published by states or international alliances (e.g., NATO) take into account the changing threats, as a rule they still fail to connect this changed assessment and practical operative-tactical actions to be taken.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the substantially more complex threats evolving in the end of the East-West conflict underscores the need for the increased application of the concept of grand strategy—that is to say, a foreign policy that subordinates the use of the whole range of available means to a clearly defined and targeted goal.

This is what lends validity to Walter Russell Mead's criticism of American foreign policy prior to 11 September 2001, a decade which he labels unequivocally as "the lost years."<sup>17</sup> Joseph Nye's observation that the United States failed to understand how to apply both hard and soft power in a balanced fashion is also relevant for the period after the attacks on New York and Washington. Barack Obama in his outright criticism of the counterterrorism policy of his predecessor makes this evidently clear, writing: "The Bush Administration responded to the unconventional attacks of 9/11 with conventional thinking of the past, largely viewing problems as state-based and principally amenable to military solutions."<sup>18</sup> Obama himself, as well as the Europeans, will be judged by the degree to which they are able to make a sufficient analysis of the threats we face, starting with a justified criticism of the Bush administration policies, and based on that, whether they then reach the right conclusions about which foreign and security policies should be applied in dealing with the new challenges arising in the years to come.

Using the three areas previously mentioned—the threats posed by international terrorism, those flowing from failed states, and the dangers stemming from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—we can explore the potential for cooperation as well as conflict in transatlantic relations in the years ahead. By connecting the relevant security policy area with a case study in point, we can more easily identify what actions should be taken. Afghanistan, for example, undoubtedly represents the central front in the clash with transnational terrorism. The partial and imperfect stabilization achieved in Iraq serves as ample evidence for the dangers resulting from a decline (or a lasting fragility) in state authority. And, the ongoing effort by the Iranian regime to gain possession of nuclear weapons in the face of opposition by the international community vividly demonstrates the necessity of an effective nonproliferation policy.

## **Afghanistan and the Clash with Transnational Terrorism**

The collapse of New York City's twin towers marked the defining moment for both of George W. Bush's terms in office.<sup>19</sup> From that point on, not only did the struggle against transnational terrorism stand indisputably at the center of American foreign and security policy, as a consequence of the attacks of 9/11 there followed "a fundamental reorientation of foreign policy,"<sup>20</sup> or, in the opinion of Ivo Daalder and James Lindsey,

what might be called a “Bush revolution”<sup>21</sup> that broke with the traditional foundations of American engagement in the world. The worldwide solidarity initially directed toward the United States gave way to an increasing degree of skepticism that eventually developed into determined opposition on the part of the Paris-Berlin-Moscow-Beijing axis during the run-up to the Iraq War in 2003. The source and object of the former did not, however, lie primarily with the, by then, obvious defects in the concept of a global war on terror.<sup>22</sup> Rather, it was differing visions about how to shape international order that played a primary role in bringing about the conflict—together with feeling on the part of the above-mentioned states that they were being marginalized by the “superpower” United States. The critics that outright rejected the link made between the war on international terrorism and regime change in Baghdad—itself based on a non-existent connection between Saddam Hussein and the terror network of Osama bin Laden—were undoubtedly right. At the same time, one must also point out that “old Europe” did not itself engage to a significant degree in a needed discussion of strategic issues. This applied equally to the transatlantic debate, the discussion going on within the EU and, finally, internal disputes in each of the countries named above.<sup>23</sup>

To date, the desperately needed transatlantic debate on how to wage the campaign against transnational terrorism has not yet been started. This is all the more surprising given the statements made in all relevant documents that have declared terrorism as one of if not *the* central security challenges of our times. Furthermore, Europeans for years have made considerable efforts, in terms of both materiel and personnel resources, to combat terrorism—and at substantial costs, not least in terms of their own military losses. At the heart of the long-overdue strategic debate should be the questions regarding the relationship of military to nonmilitary means, the precise nature of the political goals to be pursued, and finally, who exactly our enemies are. The Bush administration demonstrated serious shortcomings in all these areas. First, war was declared on the phenomenon of terrorism in general rather than on one or more specific terrorist organizations—which invariably made it difficult to determine what would define victory.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the American government also failed in its attempt to apply a targeted and diversified use of available means in combating terrorism—not least because of its decision to open a “second front” in Iraq, which, contrary to the assertion by the president and his advisors, became a battlefield in the fight against international terrorism only *after*

the intervention by the “coalition of the willing.” These miscalculations and lapses are particularly inexcusable given that the central purpose of strategic action is to achieve a balance between the purpose pursued and the resources at one’s disposal.

For the Europeans, the situation was precisely the reverse. Although their nonmilitary capabilities and their awareness of the need for efforts that integrate all available means are both greater than in the United States in recent years, the ability of European armed forces to project power still leaves much to be desired. This fact has recently been recognized even by the European Parliament in its resolution on *European Security Strategy* (*ESS*).<sup>25</sup> Especially serious is the gap between threat assessment and the means available to respond to the challenges identified that becomes apparent when reading the *ESS*. A coherent analysis of the external environment neither establishes criteria that have to be met before a decision to intervene is taken nor does it say against whom or where the intervention is to be directed. Finally, there is a grave need for a concise definition of interests to properly measure success or failure of any intervention—something one also searches for in vain in the *ESS*.<sup>26</sup> In sum, both Europe and the United States evince similar shortcomings with respect to the linkages between ends and means. With respect to the United States, a glance at the national security strategies published by the Bush administration gives ample evidence of these shortcomings.<sup>27</sup>

With Obama’s taking office there appears at first glance to be a basis for a convergence with respect to strategy and, especially, the tactics to be employed in combating international terrorism. The new president sees Afghanistan and Pakistan as the central theaters of operation in this conflict,<sup>28</sup> an assessment shared by Europeans. Obama also appreciates the need to develop a strategy that makes use of a comprehensive set of instruments in dealing with the challenges to be overcome.<sup>29</sup> This assessment has already been echoed in statements from the single official left over from the Bush administration. In a notable article, Defense Secretary Robert Gates emphasized that “what the military calls kinetic operations should be subordinated to measures aimed at promoting better governance, economic programs that spur development and efforts to address the grievances among the discontented, from whom the terrorists recruit.”<sup>30</sup> In addition to the increased emphasis given to nonmilitary means, the new administration is planning to increase troop levels in Afghanistan by transferring elements from Iraq; a stepped-up program in forging Afghan

military and police forces; as well as putting pressure on Pakistan to offer greater support to the counterterrorism campaign.<sup>31</sup>

While these measures find strong support among Europeans, the United States' repeated demand—reiterated by Vice President Biden during the Munich Security Conference in early February 2009—that the Europeans drop the special exemptions and national caveats put in place by several NATO states carries with it ample potential for conflict. It is this issue which will reveal whether or not the Europeans, above all Germany, are both willing and able to overcome the taboo placed on discussions about the use of military means to achieve political ends and whether they are thereby ready to engage in a true strategic discussion. The likelihood for this to happen must be viewed with skepticism in light of the profound discrepancies in threat perception during the run-up to the Iraq War in 2003 and, more important, the considerable differences with respect to the willingness of the European and American publics to confront rising threats by preventive action in the places where they originate. The post-heroic impulse appears to be stronger in Europe than in the United States, despite claims to the contrary.<sup>32</sup> Should this assessment prove to be correct, "old Europe" would in fact be at risk of being demoted to a second-rate partner of the United States with respect to international conflict resolution and crises management for the foreseeable future. Paradoxically, this could mean that the fears that were already in circulation during the Bush presidency could turn into bitter reality during the much anticipated presidency of Barack Obama.

## **Iraq and the Dangers Associated with “Failed States”**

One of the core elements of the national security strategy of Pres. George W. Bush lay in the worldwide expansion of the "infrastructure of democracy."<sup>33</sup> With respect to the current state of affairs in Iraq and Afghanistan, at least, it is possible to say that exporting democracy by means of a militarily imposed regime change so far has failed to produce the desired results. At least this assessment holds true if one assumes that democratization implies more than merely holding national elections. Moreover, the war against Iraq served more than any other recent event to undermine America's standing in the world. As for the relative balance of power in the region, it also decidedly strengthened Iran,<sup>34</sup> drew away resources needed in the actual fight against transnational terrorism, and led to a

pronounced dispute with America's traditional allies across the Atlantic. This is just part of the collateral damage associated with George W. Bush's exploitation of the "moment of opportunity" created by 9/11.<sup>35</sup> Particularly striking is that it was the overthrow of the despotic regime of Saddam Hussein and the subsequent catastrophic mismanagement of Iraq's reconstruction by the United States that has left Iraq in danger of becoming yet another example of a failed state.<sup>36</sup> Particularly if one supports the idea of a "positive domino effect" in the Greater Middle East that should supposedly have followed Iraq's democratization, then the course of events in Mesopotamia (at least up until the temporary stabilization achieved through the massive increase in troop levels in 2007 and the switch in sides by local clan chiefs) gives ample evidence of the incompetence on the part of the United States.

In Barack Obama, Europeans find themselves face to face with a president who, like most "old Europeans," voted against the Iraq war from the start. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that one of his stated goals is to end this war.<sup>37</sup> The central element of plans directed towards that goal is the gradual redeployment of American forces, primarily to Afghanistan. Thereby Iraqi officials as well as the various ethnic groups within Iraq shall be put under pressure to establish a sustainable political order. According to current planning, the troop transfer should be completed by 2010, leaving only a few units stationed in Iraq with the task of combating the remaining terrorist elements.<sup>38</sup>

Even though the argument that there can be no purely military solution to the situation in Iraq is plausible, the approach briefly outlined above places the stability of Iraq at serious risk once the American military presence comes to an end. It is true that Obama has retained the option of (re-)adjusting troop levels to bring them in line with any deterioration of the situation on the ground in Iraq. As Toby Dodge has pointed out, this reservation is based first and foremost in a particular understanding of American interests and not on Iraqi stability.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, it is still possible that Iraq could revert into a new wave of ethnic violence producing a failed state that lacks both a central authority and, as a consequence, governmental control in many parts of the country.

In light of possible developments such as these, European silence with respect to this issue seems rather surprising, especially if one considers that failed states, together with terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are included in the *ESS* as among the foremost of the new

threats we face. The *ESS* refers explicitly to the “very serious threat”<sup>40</sup> posed to Europe through the linkage of terrorism, the accessibility of weapons of mass destruction, and failed states. The *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* also emphasizes the dangers resulting from fragile states.<sup>41</sup> One is forced to ask, therefore, why Iraq is still considered to be a purely American (and perhaps British) problem when all of Europe could be equally affected by the negative consequences of a failed reconstruction effort. Admittedly, the EU has joined in to a degree, for example in the reconstruction mission organized within the framework of EUJUST LEX (EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq). But this is hardly a sufficient effort to ensure working state structures in Iraq in the future.

Limited resources and the potential difficulty of justifying increased involvement in Iraq in the wake of opposition to the actions of the previous US administration are certainly important factors in explaining the reluctant stand taken by some European governments. At the same time, the fact that these countries are not even willing to consider the possibility of additional efforts highlights an inadequate understanding of the truly strategic dimensions of the problems at hand. Although the United States and its coalition partners bear the responsibility for the current instability and resulting dangers, the consequences will be borne by the guilty and blameless alike. As a result, both Americans and Europeans should put their capabilities to work in a joint effort to defend against threats that both face. According to some commentators, European capabilities might be applied with benefit even in Iraq. In addition to well-developed civilian capabilities, the mere participation by the European Union in the reconstruction effort could lend that enterprise greater legitimacy—and thereby present Europe with the opportunity of exercising increased influence on US decisions.<sup>42</sup> Especially in light of the uncertain chances for success of America’s current plans, it is strongly recommended that the Europeans try to enter into a truly strategic dialogue with Washington—even, if need be, through participation in a project that they originally condemned.

## Iran and the Future of Nonproliferation

With respect to the future stabilization efforts in Afghanistan there certainly is a latent potential for conflict between Europe and the United States. At the same time, closer cooperation between the transatlantic allies toward the common goal of achieving a lasting stabilization of Iraq is

unlikely any time soon. In light of these rather sobering findings is there potential for cooperation or even true partnership with respect to nuclear arms control and the prevention of an ever growing proliferation of nuclear weapons and delivery systems? There hardly is a concept that more forcefully demonstrates the continuing relevance of nuclear weapon systems as instruments of national defense as well as the importance nuclear arms control and disarmament than that of the “Second Nuclear Age.”<sup>43</sup> Contrary to the widespread hopes expressed at the end of the Cold War, nuclear weapons have by no means become obsolete. The slow but steady increase in the number of nuclear-armed states and the associated increased risk of proliferation (which also opens up the possibility of nuclear weapons getting into the hands of terrorists) along with the slow drawdown of existing arsenals make the problem of nonproliferation more acute than ever.<sup>44</sup> Iran’s determination to join the club of nuclear powers is currently at the center of the international security agenda.

As has been the case with the whole of George W. Bush’s foreign policy, most German commentators offered harsh criticisms of the previous US administration’s policy on this issue as well. Harald Müller rejects American efforts aimed at maintaining a “full spectrum dominance” as an “American mania for superiority.”<sup>45</sup> In his brief review of the Bush administration’s foreign policy, Michael Staack also offers a stinging criticism when he writes that “Bush pursued comprehensive, and especially nuclear, superiority as the foundation for a unipolar US power base; he withdrew from treaties that posed an obstacle to this goal and sought to apply all means to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>46</sup> However justified any criticism of the unilateral withdrawal from the ABM treaty or of the double standard applied to the interpretation of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty may be, it at least partially obstructs the appreciation of noteworthy elements of continuity present in American nuclear strategy, in particular the high value of nuclear weapons during the period following the watershed events of 1989–90. Moreover, the discussion over American plans to establish a missile defense shield in Europe are marked by a remarkable asymmetry that ascribes Russian objections to such a system, not to sheer power politics on Moscow’s part, but instead to the removal of the prior deterrent.<sup>47</sup>

From a strategic point of view, American policy directed towards containing the proliferation of nuclear weapon systems clearly did not pay off so far. Even if one argues that the forceful demonstration of America’s

readiness to intervene militarily—as proven by the Iraq war of 2003—played a role in Libya's decision to abandon its nuclear program, a different picture emerges with regard to North Korea and Iran. Here the message seemed to be: Get your hands on nuclear weapons as quickly as possible while the United States is occupied elsewhere. The war in Iraq proved a detriment to the goal of forestalling a nuclear-armed Iran. A sustainable resolution to the situation in Mesopotamia will not be possible without consent by Iraq's neighbor to the east. The leadership in Tehran will therefore seek to gain concessions in favor of its nuclear program in return for its willingness to cooperate on matters relating to Iraq.<sup>48</sup>

Comparing the positions of President Obama and his transatlantic allies, it is evident that among the cases considered in this article the degree of agreement and, consequently, the likelihood of cooperation loom largest in the fields of arms control and nonproliferation policies. Obama's overall plans are very ambitious indeed; securing all nuclear materials currently in circulation within four years as well as turning the whole world into a nuclear-free zone constitute a set of goals that could not be set any higher. Even unequivocal advocates of the complete elimination of such weapon systems, like Harald Müller, emphasize the lengthy period of time required for such a project, extending well beyond the two terms potentially available to President Obama.<sup>49</sup> Yet, the Europeans will note with satisfaction the intention of the new American administration to underscore the importance of the nonproliferation treaty. Beyond the field of arms control, this aim gives rise to the hope that the current American administration will generally seek to strengthen the standing of international law and international institutions.

Along with agreement on both sides of the Atlantic on the fundamental goals of arms control policy (even though the final position of the European nuclear powers, in particular that of France, with respect to complete nuclear disarmament has yet to be ascertained), there is also a high degree of agreement with respect to Iran. Against the backdrop of Tehran's continuing refusal to restrict its efforts in the use of nuclear energy to nonmilitary purposes, European governments have threatened tighter sanctions while remaining committed to a diplomatic solution. Even though the current situation in general represents an “intolerable state of affairs,” Europeans have not yet openly threatened military action.<sup>50</sup> The American government, on the other hand, has not yet taken military action off the table to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Indeed, President

Obama is able to pursue a diplomatic solution while keeping the threat of military action comparatively small. The reason for this lies in the conviction that Israel will under no circumstances permit a nuclear-armed Iran to emerge and possesses the military capabilities needed to prevent that from happening. Meanwhile, the American willingness to conduct talks with Tehran without preconditions is for Europeans a welcome change of course well suited to increase the pressure on the Iranian regime. In this view, then, the offer can be understood as a test by the American administration meant to verify Tehran's willingness to negotiate. At the same time, the utility of multilateral action in reaching diplomatic solutions in general is verified.

In sum, this suggests a change in the United States' understanding of security with respect to nonproliferation, according to which security is achieved through a step-by-step threat reduction via mutual arms reduction and not by means of an overwhelming qualitative and quantitative military power potential. It would be a mistake, however, to interpret this change as a fundamental embrace of multilateralism. Rather, it represents a kind of tactical resort to multilateralism that builds on the expectation of reciprocal concessions. If this expectation is not fulfilled, Washington will try to secure its vital interests by other means.

### **Skepticism is Justified—But Cautious Optimism as Well**

In sum, the potential for transatlantic cooperation and conflict in dealing with new security challenges and threats is ambivalent. On the one hand, given the emerging signs of actual change, there are significant opportunities for a renewed "rapprochement" between the transatlantic allies. On the other hand, one should not ignore the considerable potential for conflict arising as a result of Obama's taking office and the policy changes that will follow, as one can see, for example, in the discussion about adjustments in transatlantic burden-sharing in Afghanistan. The well-known public and political reservations in some NATO member states against an expanded involvement in the Hindu Kush, along with the obviously insufficient capabilities these actors possess, point to the central problem of contemporary transatlantic partnership. Despite nearly identical threat assessments at the political level, differences in threat perception in each country limit freedom of action. The view expressed by

the former German defense minister, Peter Struck—namely that Germany was engaged in its own defense along the Hindu Kush—has not found much resonance within the German public.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, while there is general consensus about the central goals, there are divergent views about the means to be used to achieve them. A case in point is the differing assessment of multilateralism (and its merits) by United States and “old Europe.” As Joachim Krause describes it, “While the United States subject[s] multilateralism to a cost-benefit analysis, structural and historical factors have led European governments to place a more axiomatic value on multilateralism, making it a guiding principal of their foreign policies.”<sup>52</sup> This difference is significant and limits the prospects for a truly strategic dialogue between the transatlantic partners. One does not have to go as far as British historian Niall Ferguson, who places the blame for the transatlantic squabble in the run-up to the Iraq war of 2003 on France and Germany alone.<sup>53</sup> One should, however, point out that these countries do indeed bear part of the responsibility for the temporary damage in relations with the United States, owing to their own reluctance to engage in a truly strategic debate. If there will be no significant changes, then conflicts with the Obama administration are inevitable, especially since the United States has explicitly renewed its claim for international leadership. Moreover, in view of the persisting fragmentation of American society and the serious financial and economic crises the United States currently faces, President Obama has the colossal challenge to produce a grand strategy that integrates the various political viewpoints present within the United States. The importance of the domestic dimension as a factor in the American process of strategy making should not be underestimated.<sup>54</sup>

Another central challenge facing both the United States and Europe lies in balancing ends and means in their foreign and security policies. The results of the Bush administration’s policies in this field turned out very badly indeed. But European shortcomings in this area cannot be considered less serious simply because they did not commit the degree of strategic mismanagement the United States did in postwar Iraq. The employment of the full spectrum of currently available means and, where needed, the development of new capabilities to ensure that the political objectives pursued are fulfilled are the first necessary steps to be taken. Additionally, an increased appreciation for the proportionality of ends and means is needed on both sides of the Atlantic. Here, it is of paramount importance to identify the means and methods necessary to attain the intended

results. Clearly, strategic action is interdependent; each of the two levels must take into consideration the demands but also the opportunities of the other. In sum, a critical analysis of the *ESS*, the report published last year dealing with the implementation of policy and containing relevant statements from the European Parliament, indicates that the EU has far greater deficits in this regard. For the United States it is primarily a matter of adjusting evident imbalances and resetting the framework of American strategy as it relates to the paradigm of the global war on terror—or Long War, as it has been relabeled in 2006. By contrast, Europe still lacks a conceptual foundation for a coherent strategy, in particular a definition of common European interests that could serve as a point of departure for coherent global operations. If the Atlantic partners are successful at overcoming their respective deficiencies, it could lay the basis for a real strategic dialogue which would help identify both the opportunities for cooperation in joint international action as well as those areas where different intentions compel the search for alternative ways of pursuing interests. But there still is a long way to go before we reach that point. **SSQ**

## Notes

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4. Josef Braml, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Simon Koschut, “Netzwerke entscheiden: Nicht alles wird gut nach den US-Wahlen im November” [“Networks decide—not everything is good after the US elections in November”], *DGAP-standpunkt* no. 11 (2008), 1–4, [http://www.dgap.org/midcom-serveattachmentguid-1dd589563815d8c589511dda11f1f9f31ea36b636b6/2008-08\\_standpunkt\\_11.pdf](http://www.dgap.org/midcom-serveattachmentguid-1dd589563815d8c589511dda11f1f9f31ea36b636b6/2008-08_standpunkt_11.pdf).
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8. Javier Solana, *Europäische Sicherheitsstrategie: Ein sicheres Europa in einer besseren Welt* [European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World] (Brussels: European Communities, 2003), 4ff.

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10. With respect to Germany, see Joachim Krause, "Auf der Suche nach einer Grand Strategy: Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik seit der Wiedervereinigung," *Internationale Politik* 60, no. 8 (August 2005): 16–25; as well as Ralph Rotte and Christoph Schwarz, "Wo ist die Strategie? Anmerkungen CDU/CSU-Entwurf 'Eine Sicherheitsstrategie für Deutschland,'" *Liberal* 3 (2008): 36–41.
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12. See illustration 3 on page 26 of Hans Frank, "Sicherheitspolitik in neuen Dimensionen," in *Sicherheitspolitik in neuen Dimensionen* (Berlin: Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik et al., 2001), 15–30.
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14. Mead, *Power, Terror, Peace and War*, 3.
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28. Obama, "Renewing American Leadership," 9.
29. Ibid., 11.

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31. Peter Rudolf, "Amerikas globaler Fuehrungsanspruch: Aussenpolitik unter Barack Obama," *SWP-Aktuell* 77 (November 2008): 7.
32. Münkler, *Wandel des Krieges*, 310ff.
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36. Thomas Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); and Bob Woodward, *Die Macht der Verdrängung: George W. Bush, das Weiße Haus und der Irak: State of Denial* (Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 2008).
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38. Obama, "Renewing American Leadership," 5.
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